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S E C R E T PARIS 008032

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE: BASHAR'S OFFER TO MEHLIS - FRANCE IN  
ACCORD WITH U.S. POSITION

REF: SECSTATE 213846

Classified By: POL M/C Josiah Rosenblatt, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) France agrees fully with the substance of the position laid out in reftel. A/S Jean-Francois Thibault provided this reaction at close of business, Friday, November 25, after having reviewed the question with (unnamed) MFA and Presidency senior officials during the course of the day. Thibault said that the sense of GOF thinking was that Syria must not be allowed to procrastinate -- including through negotiation of conditions with Mehlis. France would make its position known, as appropriate.

2. (S) Thibault commented that late-breaking media reports of an agreement reached in the interim between Mehlis and the SARG may make the matter moot. If the reports prove unfounded, he was confident France would adhere the "no procrastination, no negotiation" position.

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Stapleton